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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [CASC](#) [HA](#) [ASEC](#)

SUBJECT: Consular Visit to Jacmel

1. Summary. Jacmel, traditionally an arts center on Haiti's southeastern coast, now welcomes increasing numbers of Americans as residents or tourists. ConOff's May 9-10 visit to Jacmel found a city struggling with weak police and medical services but with a well-connected American community. End Summary.

Tight-Knit Wardens

2. ConOff met with all four of the Jacmel region wardens. It is apparent that the wardens know each other and the Jacmel area well. One of the wardens, James Cadet, plays an instrumental part in the revitalization of the Jacmel tourist scene and possesses a number of useful contacts in the Jacmel area. ConOff discussed with wardens the challenges they face in maintaining contact with U.S. citizens in Jacmel and updating their registration lists. The wardens plan to divide the single Jacmel city zone into three smaller sub-zones to make it easier for them to contact U.S. citizens living there.

3. Several of the wardens reported an increasing number of Americans living and visiting the area. Mr. Cadet stated that land values now surpass those of Petionville (an exclusive suburb of Port-au-Prince) due to the influx of Americans buying land. He went on to report that a festival held on May 1 drew many American tourists and that the city is planning many similar events in the future.

A well-attended Town Hall Meeting

4. Twenty-four (24) U.S. citizens attended a town hall meeting on Monday, May 9, 2005. ConOff described the work done in the Consular Section and the ACS unit's capacity to help U.S. citizens living in Haiti. ConOff stressed the importance of registering with the ACS unit, resulting in six new registrations. ConOff also accepted Social Security applications from U.S. citizens afraid to travel to Port-au-Prince and answered wide-ranging questions on visa procedures, passport requirements, and services provided to U.S. citizens in emergencies.

Police lacking bullets, radios, and tear gas

5. According to Fritz Gerald Marcel, Southern Departmental Director of the Haitian National Police (HNP), and Alain Auguste, Jacmel police chief, the police force in Jacmel lacks sufficient equipment to perform its work. ConOff met with the two Police officials on Monday, May 9. They stated they were severely under-equipped with limited supplies of bullets and weapons and no tear gas at their disposal. Mr. Marcel, the departmental director, mentioned he lacked the capacity to communicate quickly with police stations in outlying areas due to a faulty radio system. Mr. Marcel also reported that he had asked, to no avail, for more police equipment six months ago. In spite of their limited resources the two police officers described a very calm security situation in Jacmel. They reported the HNP had a nightly presence on the streets of Jacmel. Mr. Marcel stated the most frequently reported crimes were sexual assaults on minors and small-scale robberies with the total absence of kidnappings.

6. ConOff toured the Jacmel Police Station and civil prison on Tuesday, May 10 with Mr. Auguste. The police station is clean and appears in good repair. The holding cells in the police station did not appear to be crowded. The prison cells have beds and the prison appears cleaner than prisons in Port-au-Prince. Unfortunately, the infirmary and prison toilets were destroyed during the events surrounding ex-President Aristide's departure in February, 2004 and have not yet been repaired. Justice moves as slowly in Jacmel as it does in Port-au-Prince. There are 122 prisoners in the prison of which only 17 have been formally convicted and sentenced.

Dedicated doctors without life-saving equipment

17. The public hospital lacks life-saving equipment according to its director, Dr. Edmond Pierre. ConOff met with Dr. Pierre on May 9 and toured his hospital the following day. Saint Michel Hospital is the only public hospital in Jacmel. It is a 96-bed facility with 12 doctors. According to Dr. Pierre, the hospital has a team of health care practitioners dedicated to responding to sexual assaults. There is a doctor at the hospital at all hours; however, the hospital lacks the normal life-saving equipment one would find in an American emergency room. Additionally, the hospital's one ambulance is frequently employed for divers other purposes and is not available for emergency use.

18. ConOff's tour of the hospital complex revealed a clean facility without any noxious odors. There are private rooms available for a supplemental charge. The hospital does have a morgue, which, according to Dr. Pierre, is often the victim of power outages.

Jacmel needs continuing consular outreach

19. Comment. The American population in Jacmel is large and continues to grow with the increasing possibility of sustained tourism. The public officials ConOff met with appeared dedicated to their jobs and eager to help Americans in need in spite of their lack of resources. The U.S. citizen wardens in Jacmel are well integrated into the community and provide valuable services to U.S. citizens in Jacmel. Unfortunately, with the increasing presence of U.S. citizens in Jacmel, the opportunities for misfortune also increase. The ACS unit will continue to build bridges to contacts in Jacmel who can aid U.S. citizens who find themselves in need there. End Comment.
Griffiths